

# AVIATION

*The Oldest American Aeronautical Magazine*

MARCH 23, 1925

Issued Weekly

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VOLUME  
XVIII

## SPECIAL FEATURES

NUMBER  
12

CURTISS CARRIER PIGEON

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THE BUHL-VERVILLE AIRCRAFT CORPORATION FORMED

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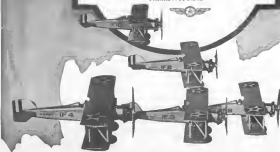
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## AVIATION

VOL. XXIII

MARCH 23, 1925

No. 12

### The Anti Aircraft Gun Fizzle

**J**UST as we had expected, the claims of the Coast Artillery anti aircraft officers who gave Congress and the country the impression that their guns could hit aircraft flying at normal altitudes has been disproved. It seems regrettable that these have ever been introduced to anyone than made by U.S. officers before the Congressional Committee. When aircraft, flying at a thousand feet against a lead wind in a straight line and having a target could not be located by the "nose of machine gun bullets" the answer must be clear. The pilots of the planes said that the three positions were now closer than several hundred yards. And yet this test was to measure the country that the real protection against air forces is not aircraft artillery.

The evidence that must be stirring in the minds of the Naval Board that claimed that "in defending a battleship against air attack, the anti aircraft gun probably holds first place" must be interesting. The fact that the "star shell" (incendiary) of the bureau so that a fact can be right flying aircraft was not tested at Fort Monroe. The Navy should conduct a similar test from the rolling decks of their battleships and determine whether or not the U.S. tests indeed because of poor performance. Aircraft have always sunk battleships under favorable conditions. The burden of proof for the efficiency of anti aircraft weapons will be very heavy after the strike at Hong Kong Roads.

### Training a Civilian Air Reserve

**T**HE United States will soon be faced by the problem of training a civilian air reserve for war emergency. It is true that some eight thousand pilots belong to the Air Reserve Officers' Reserve Corps, but of the number only a small percentage attend the yearly refresher course which the Army Air Service provides for their benefit. Those who do not keep their hand on the stick, even if only for limited periods, get "rusty" and gradually forget most of what they were taught during the war, so that in a future emergency their value to National Defense would be slight. Besides, the fliers keep on, the war time pilots are not getting any younger, and military flying is decidedly a young man's game. The problem is not yet solved, but it already seems less to determine how the Army and the Navy will build up three civilian reserves for emergency.

Our advertising columns list some twenty flying schools where the student cadet can learn to fly. Some of these establishments have trained but a few pupils, while others have trained thousands. In the aggregate they are turning out a large number of new fliers each year, and give refresher courses to an equal more. Most of the pupils are young and they have a natural aptitude which at least the well-meaning of flying will be of real value in time of emergency. Some of the students continue their flying and

become really expert pilots, and so such would be of value in primary instruction of fliers for the Army. Whatever way we look at it, the civilian flying schools of the country have a real and direct value in a military reserve.

It would seem as if the military authorities could profit by making out some scheme of cooperation with the existing civilian schools. It would take very little help on the part of the government to increase considerably the number of students trained and also to increase the thoroughness of the training given. The government would profit by the use of civilian fields, part of the expense of which is covered by other forms of flying. As the student would be paying part of the expense, there would be a considerable saving over the training of students in a purely governmental school. The students trained in a civilian school would have a better chance of going out and earning a living in commercial flying than would a student trained in a military school. The military would probably want to do the primary training of their own regular personnel, but cooperation with the civilian flying schools would give them a large field of partly trained fliers and would afford a chance to pick out those who showed aptitude for flying and desired to go into the regular service or into the reserve. The fact that the existing civilian schools are scattered all over the country would enable many of the students to live at home and would save much expense in transportation.

The exact form of the cooperation would have to be worked out, but where advantages for both sides can be seen, it would seem as though something could be accomplished in this line. In England, France and Italy primary training for the army is done in civilian schools and if our government wants to help civilian aviation, here is an opportunity to do so with a real saving to the government.

### Hard to Understand

**T**HERE has been of late a veritable conflict of misapprehended statements coming from Washington regarding the aircraft situation. The latest is an eighty page volume giving the testimony of Brig. Gen. Hugh A. Denny before a Congressional Committee appointing the Curry Bill which provides for the creation of a Department of Aeronautics.

As a statement let anyone try to obtain a copy of General Denny's Annual Report. Every publication was refused a copy and were told that there were no funds available for the underpinning of said document. For the first time in ten years the only aeronautical weekly has not been able to give its readers a complete digest of the annual report of the program of the Army Air Service.

Every other branch of the Government prints reports of paper about all subjects under the sun but an important business report as the annual report of one of the chief branches of the Government is not available even in the press.

It is hard to understand.













# UNITED STATES AIR FORCES

## U. S. ARMY AIR SERVICE

### Anti-Aircraft Demonstration a Failure

On March 6 at Fort Monmouth there was held a demonstration by the Coast Artillery Corps of their anti-aircraft weapons. The demonstration was held by order of Secretary Weeks and was intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of these weapons. In this it was a complete failure. Before the anti-aircraft units there, was a review of aircraft at Langley Field in the morning. This was merely held in the form of a recital of the fact that the Air Service was a subordinate branch of the Army. In this demonstration it was clearly shown that the anti-aircraft units would be unable to defend the battlefield, or other target, would be destroyed by direct attack on the gun even by machine gun fire and mortar bombs.

In the afternoon the anti-aircraft 3 in. guns and the machine guns fired in several targets. In firing the machine guns were handicapped by a faulty side wind and other factors, and the Air Service efforts were fruitless in achieving their advantage in these respects. Only two guns were fired at a battery because the personnel was insufficient in number to man them. The ammunition was not manufactured during the war and the guns were obsolete.

Two anti-aircraft 3 in. guns were fired thirty-two times at targets levelled by mortar bombs from Langley Field without scoring an actual hit. The targets measured 10 ft. in length and 4 ft. in diameter. They were levelled on a straight line at constant altitude and at elevations ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 ft.

After these tests, eight 30-caliber Browning machine guns took part in the target work, with machine stoppage at altitudes ranging about 1,000 ft. They were aimed later by the anti-aircraft 60-caliber machine guns. The single hit found by accident when the target was examined proved to be due to a 20-caliber bullet.

In the evening the searchlight batteries were to defend the fortress against a bombing attack. The bombers moved to the attack between 6 and 7 o'clock, their direction and exact line of approach being unknown to the searchlight batteries. The plan was to arrive over their objective and release gas-filled flare "bonnie" without first being detected by the searchlights.

The flares were the shafts of light groping vainly for the engine that the listening device revealed. Two of the pilots, after dropping their flares, turned on their flying lights and revealed themselves to the ground forces, but the third refused to reveal and never was picked up.

In one thing only were the airmen defeated. After they had allowed themselves to be caught in the rays of the searchlights they did not come within 100 ft. of the target in a quarter, because they had accomplished their purpose and could afford to give the disappointed searchlight operators a little entertainment.

Before the "bonnie" a fast plane went over, dropping a series of flares to boulder the light batteries, but these did not prove a great handicap. The sky was clear and bright moonlight, the searchlights' trouble simply was that they couldn't find their prey.

### First Pursuit Group Maneuvers

The first pursuit group recently made an attempt to make a dawn dash flight from Langley Field, Md. to Miami, Fla. The take-off was made from Selfridge Field at 6:34 a.m. Feb. 25 with twelve planes. They arrived at Wilbur Wright Field at 7:45. Lieutenant Whitcomb crashed on landing due to hitting a net. In addition the engine in Major Leachman's plane refused to start and he decided to

return to Selfridge and start again the next day. However after changing a magnet, he changed his mind and the formation, minus Lieutenant Whitcomb and Ward, took off for Miami, Fla. at 8:55 a.m. The other three ships took off shortly after ten o'clock, a new plane for Lieutenant Whitcomb having arrived from Selfridge Field.

The formation was further delayed between Dayton and Miami by unfavorable weather. Major Leachman landed at Enterprise, Ga. to get his bearings and immediately rejoined the formation. All the planes arrived at Miami except that of Lieutenant Leachman who had a forced landing on a difficult field at Grey, Ga. about twenty miles away. On the day soon nearly the commander decided to abandon the dash-to-Miami attempt.

On March 11 only two flights were made and the group returned at approximately eight. The formation took off for Miami shortly after 8:30 a.m. on March 7 and arrived at Miami soon after noon. Major Leachman stated upon arrival, that although the first attempt was not successful, the flight proved that the project was practicable and that our striking force could be brought into action anywhere in the United States within twenty-four hours.



Lieutenant Whitcomb

Lieutenant Whitcomb adjusting the Target Glider

### Target Glider Tests at Langley Field, Va.

Last, Wm. J. McClellan, Jr., carried on these Target Glider, Model G-1, tests at Langley Field in the early part of last month and finally achieved success on the last one. The flight on Feb. 6 lasted approximately two minutes from a release at 2,000 ft. The release on the following day at 3,000 ft. resulted in a full spin into the ground upon a 60 sec. After making many adjustments, another release was made at 2,400 ft. and the glider landed 11 mi. 30 sec. later. The last test was for the purpose of providing an R&D to free upon the target. Due to the Marine gun jamming, Major Nixson was able to fire only four shots, with no effect on the glider. The released glider floated for approximately 200 yds. due to the wind blowing the glider off its intended course and was in danger. The Target Glider flew steadily at all times during the flight and though the Marine guns on the ship jammed, Major Nixson continued maneuvering for position and controlling the glider until it was within 200 ft. of the ground. The entire population of Langley Field and the N.A.A.C. Laboratories turned out to witness the release and were well rewarded in watching a motionless flight. The student class of the Air Service Technical School acted as

witnesses and may have seen some interesting data in spring on their instructors on the Theory of Flight. Technical Sergeant Ryan, who accompanied Lieutenant McClellan during the release, and who was the "Master of position" in the "air side," checked off the time of 11 min. 20 sec. for the flight which checked with the observers on the tower. The previous record for this test in 3 min. from a release at 2,500 ft. by Selfridge Field in 1929.

During the middle of February Lieutenant McClellan conducted another Target Glider test, during the course of which he released the glider from 2,500 ft. After 18 min 30 sec. of flying the glider landed at Chesapeake Bay about three miles from shore. It was recovered and found to be unharmed.

### Changes at Kelly Field

A recent announcement states that Kelly Field has suffered the loss of a number of officers since the last issue of the *News Letter*, some by transfer and some by marriage. The married officers, who the loss by marriage was only a temporary one, are: Lt. Lathin A. Smith, having gone on leave to Little Rock, Ark., where he married; Miss Marjorie Edith Williams and later returned to Kelly Field with his new "commanding officer" after a short honeymoon.

Lieut. John V. Coffey, just recently Post Adjutant, joined for his new station in the Panama Canal Zone. Lieut. John E. Cannon, Officer in Charge of Flying of the Advanced Flying School, left for duty in Hawaii. Maj. S. W. Friedman, formerly of the Advanced Flying School, D. C., where he is taking the Industrial War Plans Course.

The incoming officers are Maj. R. M. Jones, Lieut. Lathin A. Smith and G. G. Leachman, all of whom were transferred from Brooks Field to take up positions in the Observation. First Lt. S. W. Williams reported from Selfridge Field and was assigned to the Parent Department of the Advanced Flying School.

### The Shamashod Not to Fly Soon

The small secret of being available this year materialize the navy's program for expansion of the Los Angeles and Shamashod before September, Secretary of the Navy W. C. Clegg recently. Only the Los Angeles will be in active service before September. Evans, Jr., had informed Mr. W. C. Clegg that the people of Shamashod, Va., wanted to give a navy service to the Shamashod, and had asked that the district visit that term to see the people of the town.

"At present," Secretary W. C. Clegg wrote to Mr. Evans, "a very difficult problem to solve is the one of the three supplies such as the Shamashod is carrying and a series of visits with the Shamashod. The district is not prepared to determine the possibility of starting the Shamashod on a regular mail and passenger route, it is not expected that the Shamashod will be placed on an operating status prior to September, 1935, and will not make a transatlantic flight before 1936."

The Los Angeles now is being overhauled at Lakehurst, N. J., in preparation for a return flight to Bermuda or a visit to Port St. George.

### Reserve Officer Drawn

Capt. J. C. McAlister of Mount Pleasant, Pa., a Reserve officer and student aviator, was drowned, and Lieut. Col. William E. Schaeffer of New Jersey, currently assigned March 10 when the airplane in which they were flying plunged into the Potomac River near Millersville, Va.

Rapids of nature when the plane was only a short distance above the water were met by Captain Schaeffer to have been the cause of the crash.

### Parachutes Save Two More

When two Kelly Field planes collided in mid-air at an altitude of about 4,000 ft. March 6, both pilots jumped from the crashing machine in perfect timing and safely landed. The burning plane, which was in the air, crashed. The Lieut. C. D. MacCallister and Capt. C. A. Leachman, of the advanced flying school of Kelly Field, were the pilots. With the assistance of many airmen, neither was hurt.

This is the first time in history that two pilots have binged from different ships following a collision and landed without fatal injury.

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